

**REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-3, 11, 17, 20-26, 30-35 and 38-51 have been withdrawn from consideration due to a previous restriction/election requirement. Claims 4, 9-10 and 16 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claim 52 has been added. Hence, claims 5-8, 12-15, 18, 19, 27-29, 36, 37 and 52 are pending in the present application, of which claim 52 is independent.

**Noted - Priority Document Received By USPTO**

The indication (see Office Action Summary, box 12.a.1) that the certified copy(ies) of the priority document(s) has been received by the USPTO is noted with appreciation.

**Noted - IDS Considered**

The indication (see Examiner-initialed PTO form 1449 mailed with Office Action dated September 2, 2009) that the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) as filed on May 5, 2004 and December 31, 2007 and references listed therein have been considered is noted with appreciation.

**Objection to the Specification**

The specification is objected to because the specification is replete with terms which are not clear, concise and exact. By the foregoing amendments, the specification has been amended to be in further compliance with 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

The specification is further objected because of asserted spacing problems. It is respectfully submitted that the specification was written with "justified" text font

so that text on each line consistently aligns with the left and right margins, given rise to inconsistent spacing between words in a line depending on the number of words that can be fitted on each line. Hence, no such spacing problems exist as asserted.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

**Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph**

Claims 4-10, 12-16, 18, 19, 27-29, 36 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The rejection of claims 4, 9, 10, and 16 is moot in view of their cancellation by the foregoing amendments.

The Office Action asserts on page 3 that "[i]t is unclear what a unit is composed of. Is the unit a computer? Is the unit software being performed by a computer?" It is respectfully submitted that in one or more embodiments of the present disclosure, each "unit" as claimed may be realized, for example, by a computerized device, such as a server device, running or executing software therein.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

**Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103**

Claims 4-10, 12-16, 18, 19, 27-29, 36 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Harmes et al. (US 2004/0085355) in view of Rivette et al. (US 2007/0208669).

Again, the rejection of claims 4, 9, 10, and 16 is moot in view of their cancellation by the foregoing amendments.

Regarding new independent claim 52 in place of canceled claim 4, claim 52 recites, in part:

...  
an access right registering unit to register a right to  
access the agreement data or the balance data; and  
an access right check unit,  
...  
the access right registering unit registers, in a table of the  
storage device, an access allowance/denial of a user for respective  
department groups for group data obtained by grouping the  
agreement data and the balance data, and  
the access right check unit checks the access allowance/denial  
of the user to the agreement data or the balance data using the table.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Harmes nor Rivette describes an agreement management system that includes an access right registering unit and an access right check unit as claimed.

Among other things, a *prima facie* case of obviousness must establish that the asserted combination of references teaches or suggests each and every element of the claimed invention. In view of the distinctions of claim 52 noted above, at least one claimed element is not present in the asserted combination of references. Hence, the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness vis-à-vis claim 52. Claims 5-8, 12-15, 18, 19, 27-29, 36 and 37 ultimately depend from claim 52, respectively, and so at least similarly distinguish over the asserted combination of references.

In view of the foregoing discussion, the rejection of claims 5-8, 12-15, 18, 19, 27-29, 36, 37 and 52 is improper. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

### **Conclusion**

In light of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections of record and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would assist in resolving any issues pertaining to the allowability of the above-identified application, please contact the undersigned at the telephone

## PATENT

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number listed below. Please grant any required extensions of time and charge any fees due in connection with this request to deposit account no. 50-4610.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 4, 2010

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